

# Brian Eno Creates a List of 20 Books That Could Rebuild Civilization

*in Books / March 10th, 2022 Leave a Comment*



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Artist and music producer Brian Eno wrote one of my very favorite books: [A Year with Swollen Appendices](#), which takes the form of his personal diary of the year 1995 with essayistic chapters (the “swollen appendices”) on topics like “edge culture,” generative music, new ways of , pretension, CD-ROMs (a relevant topic back then), and payment structures for recording artists (a relevant topic again today). It also includes a fair bit of Eno’s correspondence with Stewart Brand, once editor of the *Whole Earth Catalog* and now president of the [Long Now Foundation](#), “a counterpoint to today’s accelerating culture” meant to “help make long-term thinking more common” and “creatively foster responsibility in the framework of the next 10,000 years.”

It so happens that Eno now sits on the Long Now Foundation’s [board](#) and has had a hand in some of its projects. Naturally, he contributed suggested reading material to the

foundation's [\*Manual of Civilization\*](#), a collection of books humanity could use to rebuild civilization, should it need rebuilding. [Eno's full list](#), which spans history, politics, philosophy, sociology, architecture, design, nature, and literature, runs as follows:

- [\*Seeing Like a State\*](#) by James C Scott
- [\*The Mind in the Cave: Consciousness and the Origins of Art\*](#) by David Lewis-Williams
- [\*Crowds and Power\*](#) by Elias Canetti
- [\*The Wheels of Commerce\*](#) by Fernand Braudel
- [\*Keeping Together in Time\*](#) by William McNeill
- [\*Dancing in the Streets\*](#) by Barbara Ehrenreich
- [\*Roll Jordan Roll\*](#) by Eugene Genovese
- [\*A Pattern Language\*](#) by Christopher Alexander et al
- [\*The Face of Battle\*](#) by John Keegan
- [\*A History of the World in 100 Objects\*](#) by Neil MacGregor
- [\*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity\*](#) by Richard Rorty
- [\*The Notebooks\*](#) by Leonardo da Vinci
- [\*The Confidence Trap\*](#) by David Runciman
- [\*The Discoverers\*](#) by Daniel Boorstein
- [\*Mother Nature: A History of Mothers, Infants, and Natural Selection\*](#) by Sarah Hrdy
- [\*War and Peace\*](#) by Leo Tolstoy
- [\*The Cambridge World History of Food \(2-Volume Set\)\*](#) by Kenneth F. Kiple & Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas
- [\*The Illustrated Flora of Britain and Northern Europe\*](#) by Marjorie Blamey & Christopher Grey Wilson
- [\*Printing and the Mind of Man\*](#) by John Carter & Percy Muir
- [\*Peter the Great: His Life and World\*](#) by Richard Massie

If you'd like to know more books that have shaped Eno's thinking, do pick up a copy of [\*A Year with Swollen Appendices\*](#). Like all the best diarists, Eno makes plenty of references to his day-to-day reading material, and at the very end — beyond the last swollen appendix — he includes a bibliography (below), on which you'll find more from Christopher Alexander, a reappearance of Rorty's [\*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity\*](#), and even Stewart Brand's own [\*How Buildings Learn\*](#) (on [a television version of which](#) the two would collaborate). You can find [other writers and thinkers's contributions to the \*Manual of Civilization\* here](#).

- [\*Best Ideas: A Compendium of Social Innovation\*](#) edited by Nicholas Albery
- [\*A Foreshadowing of the 21st Century Art: The Color and Geometry of Very Early Turkish Carpets\*](#) by Christopher Alexander
- [\*Bridge Over the Drina\*](#) by Ivo Andric
- [\*Jihad vs. McWorld\*](#) by Benjamin Barber
- [\*The Artful Universe\*](#) by John Barrow
- [\*Brain of the Firm\*](#) by Stafford Beer
- [\*Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil\*](#) by John Berendt
- [\*The Creators\*](#) by Daniel Boorstin
- [\*Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery\*](#) edited by B.A. Botkin
- [\*How Buildings Learn\*](#) by Stewart Brand
- [\*Civilization and Capitalism\*](#) by Fernand Braudel
- [\*The Transformation of War\*](#) by Martin van Creveld
- [\*The Transfiguration of the Commonplace\*](#) by Arthur Danto
- [\*River Out of Eden\*](#) by Richard Dawkins
- [\*Darwin's Dangerous Idea\*](#) by Daniel Dennett

- [\*Defence Policy Making\*](#) edited by G.M. Dillon
- [\*Women En Large: Image of Fat Nudes\*](#) by Laurie Toby Edison and Debbie Notkin
- [\*Birdsong\*](#) by Sebastian Faulks
- [\*Trust\*](#) by Francis Fukuyama
- [\*Edge City\*](#) by Joel Garreau
- [\*Ecce Homo\*](#) by George Grosz
- [\*Beyond Culture\*](#) by Edward T. Hall
- [\*Managing the Commons\*](#) by Garrett Hardin and John Baden
- [\*The Middle Ages\*](#) by Friedrich Herr
- [\*Going Bugs\*](#) by James Hillman
- [\*Culture of Complaint\*](#) by Robert Hughes
- [\*The Waning of the Middle Ages\*](#) by Johann Huizinga
- [\*The State We're In\*](#) by Will Hutton
- [\*Out of Control: The Rise of Neo-Biological Civilization\*](#) by Kevin Kelly
- [\*Wild Blue Yonder\*](#) by Nick Krotz
- [\*Fetish Girls\*](#) by Eric Kroll
- [\*The Leopard\*](#) by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa
- [\*Artificial Life\*](#) by Steven Levy
- [\*Planetary Overload\*](#) by A.J. McMichael
- [\*Being Digital\*](#) by Nicholas Negroponte
- [\*Erotica Universalis\*](#) by Gilles Neret
- [\*Living Without a Goal\*](#) by Jay Ogilvy
- [\*Billy the Kid\*](#) by Michael Ondaatje
- [\*Evolution of Consciousness\*](#) by Robert E. Ornstein
- [\*Art and Pornography\*](#) and [\*Man's Rage for Chaos\*](#) by Morse Peckham
- [\*Works and Texts\*](#) by Tom Phillips
- [\*The Language Instinct\*](#) by Stephen Pinker
- [\*In Search of a Better World\*](#) by Karl Popper
- [\*Prisoner's Dilemma\*](#) by William Poundstone
- [\*Postcards\*](#) by Annie Proulx
- [\*Consequences of Pragmatism\*](#) and [\*Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity\*](#) by Richard Rorty
- [\*The Moor's Last Sigh\*](#) by Salman Rushdie
- [\*England's Dreaming\*](#) by Jon Savage
- [\*Lords of the Rim\*](#) by Sterling Seagrave
- [\*Art and Physics\*](#) by Leonard Shlain
- [\*I am That: Conversations with Sri Nisaragadatta Maharaj\*](#)
- [\*Face of the Gods\*](#) and [\*Flash of the Spirit\*](#) by Robert Farris Thompson
- [\*Ocean of Sound\*](#) by David Toop
- [\*The Seven Cultures of Capitalism\*](#) by Charles Hampden Turner
- [\*Black Lamb and Grey Falcon\*](#) by Rebecca West
- [\*Art and Anarchy\*](#) by Edgar Wind

Note: An earlier version of this post appeared on our site in 2015.

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*[Colin Marshall](#) writes on cities, language, Asia, and men's style. He's at work on a book about Los Angeles, [A Los Angeles Primer](#), and the video series [The City in Cinema](#). Follow him on Twitter at [@colinmarshall](#) or on [Facebook](#).*